



DISPLAY DEVICE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to the structure of a pixel region of an active matrix display device and, more specifically, to the structure of a black matrix (BM) and auxiliary capacitors that are connected in parallel to respective pixel electrodes.

Further, the invention generally relates to the structure of a pixel region of flat panel displays that require a black matrix.

2. Description of the Related Art

Active matrix liquid crystal display devices are known, in which at least one thin-film transistor is connected to each of a number of pixel electrodes which are arranged in a matrix form, and charging, and discharging of each pixel electrode is controlled by the associated thin-film transistor.

Each pixel electrode constitutes a capacitor together with a counter electrode that is opposed to the pixel electrode with a liquid crystal therebetween.

In actual operation, however, since the capacitance of the capacitor constituted by each pixel electrode portion is not sufficiently large, an auxiliary capacitor is desired. However, when an electrode of the auxiliary capacitor is made of a conductive material such as a metal, it acts as a light-shielding portion in each pixel, resulting in a decrease of the aperture ratio.

On the other hand, a light-shielding member called "black matrix" is needed around each pixel electrode.

In general, regions where source lines (wiring lines for supplying currents to the respective source regions of the thin-film transistors) and gate lines (wiring lines for applying signal voltages to the respective gate electrodes of the thin-film transistors) are arranged in a matrix form have an uneven surface. As a result, a rubbing operation on an orientation film can not be performed properly in those regions, so that the orientation of liquid crystal molecules may be disordered there. This may cause a phenomenon that light leaks undesirable or, conversely, a desired quantity of light is not transmitted around the pixels. Further, the liquid crystal may be disabled from performing a desired electro-optical operation in the above regions.

If the above phenomenon occurs, a displayed image is blurred around the pixels, to thereby impair clearness of the image as a whole.

There is known a structure for solving the above problems in which structure a light-shielding film is so formed as to cover the edges of the pixel electrodes. The light-shielding film is called "black matrix" (BM).

U. S. Patent No. 5,339,151 discloses a structure including a black matrix. In this technique, as shown in Fig. 2C of this patent, a black matrix extending from gate lines is so formed as to overlap with the edges of pixel electrodes. This structure is adapted to form auxiliary capacitors in overlapping portions of the black matrix and the pixel electrodes.

However, the technique of this patent has the following two problems. First, since the black matrix extends from the gate lines. First shielding is not complete. This is because source lines cannot be overlapped with the black matrix to avoid crosstalk. Light leakage should be tolerated in those portions.

Second, since the black matrix occupies the same plane as the gate lines, naturally

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it cannot perform light shielding for the sate lines themselves. Further, the black matrix cannot perform light shielding for the source lines to avoid crosstalk as described above.

With the recent development of digital equipments, influences of electromagnetic waves from low-frequency waves to microwaves have come to cause problems. In an environment where a liquid crystal electro-optical device is used, there is concern about the influences of electromagnetic waves.

Therefore, liquid crystal display devices need to be so constructed as to be insensitive to external electromagnetic waves.

In view of the above, the above structure as described in U.S. Patent No. 5,339,181 in which the source lines and sate lines which transmit image signals are exposed to external electromagnetic waves is not preferable, because the source lines and gate lines may serve as an antenna.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the present invention is to provide a pixel structure of an active matrix liquid crystal display device which structure enables effective light shielding by means of a black matrix.

Another object of the invention is to provide a structure capable of protecting the entire device from being influenced by external electromagnetic waves.

A further object of the invention is to form auxiliary capacitors having a necessary capacitance without reducing the aperture ratio.

According to a first aspect of the invention, there is provided a display device (as shown in Figs. 1 and 2) comprising:

source lines 113 and gate lines 110 arranged in a matrix form;

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at least one pixel electrode 113 disposed in each region that is enclosed by the source lines 113 and the gate lines 110; and

a light shielding electrode 116 so disposed as to cover the source lines 113 and the gate lines 110,

wherein a periphery of the pixel electrode 118 overlaps with the light shielding electrode 116, and a coextending region 119 or 120 thereof serves as an auxiliary capacitor.

With this configuration, all the components other than the pixel electrode 118 and a drain electrode 106 of a thin-film transistor 103 can be shielded from incident light. In particular, the source lines 113 and the gate lines 110 can completely be shielded from the exterior. This prevents an event that external electromagnetic waves are received by the source lines 113 and the gate lines 110 to cause an erroneous or faulty operation of the device.

Auxiliary capacitors can be formed without reducing the aperture ratio.

In the above configuration, the pixel electrode 113 is a transparent conductive film made of ITO, for instance. While one pixel electrode is provided in each pixel in the basic configuration, the pixel electrode of each pixel may be divided into a plurality of parts.

The black matrix 116, which is so disposed as to overlap with the periphery of the pixel electrode 115, is made of titanium or chromium. The black matrix 116 serves as not only the light-shielding film but also one of the electrodes constituting an auxiliary capacitor.

It is preferable that the metal electrode 116 be so formed as to overlap with the periphery of the pixel electrode 118 over its entire circumference. Figs. 3A-3E are plan views for explaining the locational relationship of each element of Fig. 2.

According to another aspect of the invention, there is provided, as exemplified in Figs. 1 and 2, a display device comprising:

source lines 113 and gate lines 110 arranged in a matrix form; at least one pixel electrode 118 disposed in each region that is enclosed by the source lines 113 and the gate lines 110; and

a light-shielding electrode 116 so disposed as to overlap with a periphery of the pixel electrode 118,

wherein the pixel electrode 118 and the light-shielding electrode 116 constitute a capacitor through an insulating film 117, and wherein the light-shielding electrode 116 exists in a different layer than the source lines 113 and the gate lines 110.

According to a further aspect of the invention, there is provided, as exemplified in Fig. 1 and 2, a display device comprising in an order as written from the side of incident light (i.e., from the top of Fig. 1):

a pixel electrode 118;

a light-shielding electrode 116;

a source line 113; and

a gate line 110,

wherein the pixel electrode 118 and the light-shielding electrode 116 constitute a capacitor 119 or 120 in between.

In this configuration, by disposing the pixel electrode 118 closest to the incident light side and disposing the light-shielding electrode (black matrix) 116 next to the pixel electrode 118, the underlaid source line 113, gate line 110, and thin-film transistor (except for a drain region 106) can completely be shielded from incident light.

This configuration is very useful for not only light shielding but also elimination

of influences of external electromagnetic waves.

Further, the capacitors 119 and 120 can be formed without reducing the aperture ratio.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a sectional view showing the structure of a pixel region of an active matrix liquid crystal display device;

Fig. 2 is a top view of the pixel region of Fig. 1; and

Figs. 3A-3E are plane views for showing the locational relationship of each element of Fig. 2.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Figs. 1 and 2 show the structure of an active matrix liquid crystal display device that utilizes the present invention.

Fig. 1 is a sectional view taken along line A-A' Fig. 2. Figs. 1 and 2 show the structure of a single pixel that constitutes a pixel area (the pixel area consists of many pixels) of an active matrix liquid crystal display device.

Figs. 1 and 2 show only the structure on the side of a substrate on which thin-film transistors are arranged. Actually, there exists another substrate opposed to it. A liquid crystal is interposed between the two substrates through a gap of about several micrometers.

In Figs. 1 and 2 reference numeral 103 denotes a thin-film transistor, and 101 denotes a glass substrate. Alternatively, a quartz substrate may be used. Reference numeral 102 denotes a silicon oxide film as an undercoat film. An active layer of the

thin-film transistor 103 consists of a source region 104, offset gate regions 107 and 108, a channel forming region 105, and a drain region 106. The active layer is made of a crystalline silicon film that has been crystallized by heating an amorphous silicon film or illuminating it with laser light.

Reference numeral 109 denotes a silicon oxide film including a gate insulating film, and 110 denotes a gate electrode mainly made of aluminum and extending from a gate line. In Fig. 1, numeral 110 denotes both of the gate electrode and the gate line.

Reference numeral 111 denotes an anodic oxide film that has been formed by anodization using the aluminum gate electrode 110 as the anode.

Reference numeral 112 denotes a first interlayer insulating film that is a silicon oxide film. Numeral 113 denotes a lead-out electrode connected to the source region 104 and extending from a source line. In Fig. 1, numeral 113 denotes both of the source electrode and the source line.

Reference numeral 115 denotes a lead-out line connected to the drain electrode 106 as well as to an ITO electrode 118 serving as a pixel electrode. Reference numerals 114 and 117 denote second and third interlayer insulating films, respectively.

Reference numeral 116 denotes a titanium electrode also serving as a black matrix. Alternatively, a chromium film or the like may be used. To allow the titanium film 116 to serve as the black matrix, it is so formed as to overlap with the periphery of the pixel electrode 118.

Auxiliary capacitors are formed in regions 119 and 120 where the titanium electrode 116 and the pixel electrode 118 coextend with a portion of the third interlayer insulating film 117 interposed in between. These capacitors can have a large capacitance because the insulating film 117 can be made thin.

Since the titanium electrode 116 shields also the gate line 110 and the source line 113 from light, it can prevent charge generation and accumulation there due to illumination with strong light. The titanium electrode 116 also serves as a shield against external electromagnetic waves: it has a function of preventing the gate line 110 and the source line 113 from acting as an antenna, to thereby prevent the device from receiving undesired signals.

The titanium electrode 116 is so formed as to also cover the thin-film transistor 103. This is to prevent an event that light irradiating the thin-film transistor 103 affects its operation. Further, although not shown in the drawings, the electrode 116 is set to an electrically same potential as a counter electrode.

Although the insulating film 117 is a single layer in the above embodiment, it may have a multi-layer structure.

As described above, by overlapping the black matrix and the periphery of the pixel electrode through the insulating film, the coextending portion serves as the auxiliary capacitor. This structure prevents reduction in pixel aperture ratio. Further, since the insulating film can be made thin, the auxiliary capacitor can have a large capacitance.

The black matrix can provide effective light shielding as well as protect the entire device from external electromagnetic waves.

The present invention can be applied to not only black matrix liquid crystal electro-optical devices but also flat panel displays that require a pixel electrode, a black matrix covering its periphery, and an auxiliary capacitor connected to a thin-film transistor.